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Here too we can perceive an essential element of the old system, according to which the eldest member of the *gwari* administered the *sagwareulo*, succession passing from the eldest to the eldest of *gwari*, i.e. to the brother or uncle, and not from father to son.

In Strabo's time then the highest power belonged to one *sagwareulo*, the eldest member of which, or, using the old term, the *mamasakhlisi* of which, was King of the whole of Iberia.

In the actual administration of justice and of military affairs the King was assisted by the second eldest member of his *gwari*, who after the King held the first place in the country. In time of peace he administered justice, while in time of war he led the King's army.

Next to the *samepo* or royal *gwari* the place of honour was held by the *samghudelo gwari* or "priestly clan," which besides administering religious affairs provided also the executive elements in the primitive state.

No person except a member of the royal *gwari* had the right to possess bondsmen. The numbers of the royal *gwari* as well as of the priestly *gwari* were small. The number of *gwarni* in bondage was also limited. The *gwarni* in bondage were the property of the royal *gwari* in whose *sagwareulo* they lived and to whom they paid their dues in service and in kind.

The rest of the population was entirely free and consisted of free *gwarni* which in time of peace followed an agricultural life and in time of war armed themselves and fought the enemy. This free population was divided into *gwarni* or *sakhlni*, who lived each on their respective *sagwareulo*. Private

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THE PEOPLE AND THE POWER

565 423 621 ownership of land was unknown. Immovable properties belonged to the *gwari* as a whole and the oldest member of it, the *mamasakhlisi*, was its sole regulator and manager. *Gwari* or *sakhli* then represented a basic social group welded by common descent, common ownership and communal production; in other words ancient Georgia did not know a 592 621 social economic unit smaller than the *gwari*. This however, does not mean that there were no family households. The household or family as a biological and moral union did of course exist, but juridically and economically it formed an inseparable part of the *gwari*. Families could and did naturally live in separate homes, but socially they were very closely bound to their respective *gwarni* outside of which they had no legal existence. The *gwari* and *sagwareulo* system was the keystone of all social life. Hamlets, villages and towns were organized in accordance with this system, for in the majority of cases the whole village was held in a single *sagwareulo*. This system lasted until the seventh century A.D., and in some cases survived until the thirteenth century; while among the mountaineers of the Aragvi and the Ksani valleys, it persisted till as recently as the eighteenth century.

178 61 With the invasion of the Romans in 65 B.C. and the subsequent imposition of a "treaty of friendship" on Iberia, this native system of state and social organization became increasingly subject to external influences. The Romans interfered frequently, for instance, with the succession rights with a view to placing their own creatures on the Iberian throne; but the older practices proved strong enough to persist until the end of the second century A.D. when succession by primogeniture became the rule.

178 554 Other modifications began to take place. Differences in social status gradually developed within the *gwarni* and by the middle of the second century A.D. social inequalities had become already, at least partially, established.

554 The first foreign writer to allude to the existence of social inequality in Georgia was Dio Cassius who lived in the second half of the second century A.D. In giving an account of the arrival in Rome of Farsman II (A.D. 116–40) King of Iberia, and of the reception accorded him by the Emperor Hadrian, Dio Cassius states that

> "the Emperor watched Farsman and the sons of other *illustrious* Iberians perform tournaments". [1]

[1] Dio Cassius, *Hist. Romana*, III, 69.

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such favours was called *shedsqaleba* and the *sigeli* granting it— *dsqalobis-sigeli*. *Shedsqaleba* was practised widely in Georgia as well by the kings as by patrons, great and small. *Shedsqaleba* indeed became a powerful political factor as we shall presently see in the hands of the kings and was used to the advantage of the *msakhuri* class as against the *aznaurni*.

A separate group of *qmani* was constituted by the so-called *Nadsqalobevi qmani*. In the Code of Laws of Wakhtang VI (1703–24) these *qmani* were called *dsqalobis qmani*. Whether the same term was used in ancient times is not yet definitely known. A *nadsqalobevi qma* was one given away as a gift by way of *shedsqaleba*; such a *qma* was given by a patron to another loyal and *shedsqalebuli qma*.

Insolvency was one of the primary causes of the enserfment of free men. An insolvent debtor "*is slave of his creditor and a slave bought whose service is never-ending*" states one of the documents. This occurred often when money was borrowed at compound interest. Compound interest has this peculiarity that it "*early begins to accumulate and infinitely multiplies the original*". Thus because of the rapid increase by successive additions of the interest to the original loan, the debtor was in the end confronted with the payment of so great a sum that often he was unable to settle it and in consequence either he was compelled to become his creditor's slave or he died before he could effect a settlement of any kind. Then, to quote our source, "before the eyes unfolded the sight pitiable, the free sons for the debts of their fathers were taken for sale".[1]

A landowner would place a *qma* on his land only when it was vacant. The act of so placing a *qma* was called "placing or settling upon the land".[2]

Tributes or taxes paid by the peasants for holding lands for cultivation were called *begara*. *Begara* was of different kinds. A *begara* levied for holding vineyards was called *kalukhi* and for holding ordinary fields *ghala*.

The holding of lands subject to the payment of *begara* called in Georgian *sabegrod gatsema* did not necessarily entail the relation of serf to patron. The patron-client relationship demanded service or to use the Georgian expression "the slavish service" of a *qma*, and of a patron the placing or settlement of such a peasant on his land. *Sabegrod gatsema*

[1] See the eleventh-century *tigulni* of Nicortsminda in Jordania's *Kronikebi*, II, 47.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 135.

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CHAPTER XXII

THE INSTITUTION OF PATRONQMOBA

566 THE term "feudalism" is rendered in Georgian by *patron-*
567 *qmoba*, which is a compound word consisting of *patroni* and
631 *qmoba*. *Qmoba* is the abstract form of *qma*, the serf or slave,
423 and means serfdom or slavery. The word *patroni* is the Georgian variant of the Roman *patronus* and is first met with in Georgian documents dating from the eleventh century.

571 As the etymological meaning of the word indicates *patron-qmoba* denoted an organization or society based on the relationship between master and slave. The word *patroni* had several meanings. It denoted:—

1. A private owner or possessor, as for instance *tsikhis patroni*—owner of a fortress: *midsis patroni*—owner of land.
2. A tutor, protector or guardian: *Matiane Kartlisai*, for instance, relating the way in which Giorgi, the minor heir-apparent of Bagrat IV, was brought up, says, "They chose the sister of Bagrati as his *patroni* or tutoress".[1]

[643] 3. A king or sovereign: the historian of King David Aghmashenebeli, speaking of the service rendered to the King by Giorgi Dchqondideli, the *Mdsignobart-Ukhutsesi*, says that "he was from boyhood in the service of the *patroni*", i.e. of the King.[2] The Historian of Queen Tamara (1184–1212) uses *patroni* particularly frequently in the sense of "king" or "queen".[3]

Patroni thus denoted not only an owner, protector and guardian, but also even the supreme ruler of the country, the King himself. The *didebulni* officials and the powerful *gvarishvilni* ("sons of *gvarni*") were also, like the kings, called *patroni*.

631 Just as *patroni* denoted owner, protector, guardian, lord
566 and king, so the term *qma* also in its turn was used to denote
423 "a subject", even though he were a *didebuli aznauri* or a *dide-*
571 *buli* official. The Historian of Queen Tamara speaks, for instance, of the Queen's *didebulni*, namely of Zakharia Panaskerteli and Daniel Kalmakheli as "the good *qmani*, the favoured of the *patroni*", that is as of good subjects of the sovereign. The Historian of Queen Tamara calls the Shirvanshah, whose

[1] *Matiane Kartlisai*, p. 226.
[2] *Tzkhovrebai Mepet-Mepisa Davitisa*, p. 301.
[3] *Istoriani da Azmani*, p. 418.

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domains were under the Queen's protection, "the *qma* of Tamara the King", while he describes his condition as *qmad qola*—holding as *qma*.

Just as the King was *patroni* of his *didebuli* subjects, so the latter, the *qmani didebulni*, were in their turn *patronni* (plural) of their subordinates, who also were called *qmani*. The *qmani* too had their own *qmani* and were consequently *patronni* in their turn.

Patronqmoba was the mainspring of the public life of the country. It characterized not only the social and economic life but also the political and state order of the Kingdom. *Patroni* denoted, as it has already been seen, the king, the lord, the guardian, the protector and the owner-proprietor, while *qma* meant the subject as well as the one under the protection of another or owning obedience to another.

The characteristic features of *patronqmoba* in Georgia, as of feudalism in Western Europe, were twofold, namely the personal relation and the land relation; to the personal aspect of the institution of *patronqmoba*, as affecting the individual, reference has already been made. The other aspect of the institution relating to the holding of land was called in Georgian *shedsqaleba* which in meaning and substance is equivalent to the early Western European *beneficium* or the later *feudum*.

Shedsqaleba was particularly important to the high and influential officials of the state. As "the loyal and faithful service" of the great officials was of great value to the King he would naturally bestow *shedsqaleba*, or benefices, mostly on these high officials, and the King's *shedsqalebulni*—*beneficiarii*—were generally the great state officials and members of the aristocracy to whom fell the greater part of benefices.

Shedsqaleba was the very essence of *patronqmoba*, and it is necessary to examine the working of it in order to arrive at a correct understanding of the character of feudal institutions in Georgia. The Historian of Queen Tamara, for instance, states that the Queen *sheidsqala* Guzani, "*Patroni* of Shavsheti and Klarjeti to the seat of the ancient Tao(khi)an kings".[1] *Sheidsqala*, which is the past perfect tense of *shedsqaleba*, is herein used in the sense of "elevated". Guzani was appointed the *eristavt-eristavi* of the province of Tao. *Shedsqaleba* thus meant the conferring by the King of a high office.

Another passage from the same source shows that *sheds-*

[1] *Istoriani da Azmani*, p. 434.

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qaleba or *dsqaloba* was followed by blessing. Of Zakharia Mkhargrdzeli the Annalists write that the Queen "conferred *dsqaloba* by blessing upon his son, Zakharia, also"; elsewhere again it is stated that she "*sheidsqalnes* and blessed many other *didebulni* also".[1] Blessing or *dalotsva* on occasion formed part of the ceremony of conferring of every high office.

Those of the lesser *qmani* who showed great zeal, loyalty and devotion were, of course, correspondingly *shedsqalebulni*. If a *qma* who had distinguished himself received such a favour for the first time, he was *shedsqalebuli* by being newly blessed, or if he already held some office, or was entrusted with another duty he was *shedsqalebuli momatebita*, that is "additionally".

[554] At the time of blessing the beneficiary or *shedsqalebuli* received from his lord ceremonial investiture; for instance, the *Mandaturt-Ukhutsesi* was presented with a gold ferule; the *Amir-Spasalari* received a golden sword. The *eristavni* and *eristavt-eristavni* had a banner each as an ensign which distinguished their office and, although direct information is not available, it is probable that they received this symbol from the King at the time of investiture.

It is not known whether the *shedsqalebuli* took the oath of fealty, but it is certain that at the time of blessing *taqvaneba* —adoration—was laid down as a rule.

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The holding of lands and provinces was directly connected with the holding of office. The lands or provinces so connected with or dependent upon the office held by the *shedsqalebuli* were called *sapatio*, i.e. held in honour.

Besides these *sapatio* provinces and lands, the King's "loyal and devoted" state officers also received by way of *shedsqaleba* the so-called *sakharajoni*. *Sakharajo* is derived from *kharaji*, meaning "the tax", and denotes "for *kharaji*"; *sakharajo* towns therefore constituted grants, the taxes from which the beneficiary could divert to his own benefit.

Sakharajo towns, fortresses and villages were granted to *shedsqalebulni* on different conditions, some as *sakutari*, meaning "own", and some as *sanakhevrot*, meaning "for half". *Sakutari*—own—should not be understood as if the grantee received the towns as his own possessions. The term has no relation to the actual ownership of the places granted; it implies only that the whole of the taxes collected from them were given to the recipient as his own for his own use, while in the case of *sanakhevrot* (for half)—granted towns the grantee

[1] *Istoriani da Azmani*, p. 442.

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was given the benefit of only half the amount of the taxes collected.

Shedsqaleba thus meant the bestowing of favour by the King or some other *patroni* upon a *qma* by conferring an office or some other exclusive privilege and granting or conceding *sapatio* or *sakharajo* (*sakutarit* or *sanakhevrot*) towns, fortresses, villages and lands.

On occasions a *shedsqalebuli qma* received a heritable grant *mamulobit* or *samamulot*; grants *mamulobit* were conferred both upon the grantee and his descendants.

The terms of *sapatio* and *nadsqalobevi* grants were subject to variation. When a state official was removed from his office, the *sapatio* property, which he held as a perquisite of that office, reverted to the crown, but the King did not always strictly enforce his reversionary rights and occasionally left some of the properties in the family of the former beneficiary. Thus, for instance, when Queen Tamara deprived Qubasar of the office of *Amir-Spasalari*, she took into consideration his "slavish service" to her father, Giorgi III, and "deprived him of nothing except the office and of Lori".[1] Lori constituted, among other places, the *sapatio* property of the *Amir-Spasalari*, and once Qubasar was deprived of the office of *Amir-Spasalari*, Lori also was taken from him, but the remainder of his property—his *didebuli koneba*—the Queen left to him. In like manner when Gamrekeli, the *Amir-Spasalari*, died, because of the services he had rendered, "except Tmogvi, of nothing else were his sons deprived" by command of Tamara.[2]

Sapatio and *nadsqalobevi* property thus tended to become hereditary; the former rarely, but the latter more often. But it is noteworthy, as is evident from later *sigelni*, that neither the property granted *mamulobit* nor that which became in course of time hereditary, was ever considered to be fully and completely the private property of the *shedsqalebuli* or of his descendants. The holders of such properties, although called owners, were not in fact in a position to sell, exchange or donate them without the express permission of the King; only by "consulting" and by "permission" of the *patroni* could they deal in these properties. It follows therefore that the supreme owner of the *mamulobit* (heritable) and *nadsqalobevi* property remained after all the donor-*patroni* himself and not the *shedsqalebuli* or grantee.

According to the degree of *dsqaloba* bestowed, a *qma*

[1] *Istoriani da Azmani*, p. 406. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 444.

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might be either simply *shedsqalebuli* or "superlatively" (*aghmatebit*) *shedsqalebuli*.

In time of war *qmani* fought alongside and under the leadership of their respective *patronni*. From the Historian of Queen Tamara, we learn that during military operations *qmani* closely surrounded their *patronni*; after a stiff hand-to-hand fight "rejoiced", says the Historian, "as finders . . . *patroni* of his *qma* and *qma* of his *patroni*";[1] and, as he states elsewhere, during a battle "*patroni* forged ahead of his *qma* and *qma* ahead of his *patroni*".[2]

Not only in war, but also in daily life when a *patroni* travelled, he was accompanied by his *qmani*. The suites of the great *didebulni* included *aznaurni*; such *aznaurni* were called *aznaurni tanamqolni* or accompanying, that is *aznaurni* companions; their duty was to defend their patrons. *Qmani* who lived on the estates of their patrons were called *mamulis katsni* or "men of the estates".[3]

Whether all the *mamulis katsni* were, irrespective of their status, obliged to accompany their patrons in war it is difficult to say, but it is certain that the bounden duty of *shedsqalebulni qmani* was "faithful service". This obligation of a *shedsqalebuli qma* was definitely stated in the *dsqalobis dsigni*.

As yet only one *dsgalobis dsigi* or "book" has been discovered which is of the first half of the thirteenth century. This document, which was granted by the Church, gives an incomplete, but fairly approximate idea as to the manner in which *dsqaloba* was bestowed. Only on exceptional occasions after great wars and expeditions, or particular and extraordinary service, was *dsqaloba* conferred by the *patroni* himself on his own initiative; on all other occasions of everyday life *dsqaloba* had to be solicited by the loyal and *msakhureuli qma* himself; his supplication and petition had to proceed by way of a reminder that the *patroni* might reward the *msakhureuli*, or deserving, *qma*. The Catholicos Mikel speaks thus, for instance, in his *dsaqolobis dzigi*:

> "When first the invasion of the Khorazmians and then that of the Tatars devastated this kingdom and laid waste some countries (i.e. provinces) and villages, and thou and thy brothers were overtaken by misfortune, and as a result had lost whatever lands and properties you possessed, and were unable in consequence to subsist . . . hast submitted to us thy supplication so that we might confer *dsqaloba* upon

[1] *Istoriani da Azmani*, p. 373.
[2] Abuseridze Tbeli, in *Kronikebi*, II, 120–7.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 421.

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thee, Vaché Guaramisdze, and grant thee subsistence . . . *samamulot* to serve the Church. . . . We have listened to thy supplication and grant *samamulot* to thee Vaché Guaramisdze, our *Msakhurt-Ukhutsesi* and thy sons and descendants, the village of Oromasheni in return for services (*samsakhurod*) to the Church." [1]

It has already been stated that *shedsqaleba* proved particularly beneficial to the high state officials and to the great *gvarishvilni* and that to them fell the greater part of the benefices. *Shedsqaleba* enriched the "loyal and obedient" *gvariani* officials. From the works of the Historians of David Aghmashenebeli and Queen Tamara we learn that in the twelfth century, especially during the reigns of Giorgi III and his daughter, the over-generous use of *shedsqaleba* on the part of the kings, made it possible for an enormous amount of wealth both movable and immovable to accumulate in the hands of the *didebulni* and *shedsqalebulni*, rendering them owners of immense estates and of numerous *qmani*.

In order to curb the power of the grasping and unruly *didgvarianni* the kings began to follow a policy of replacing them by persons of *ugvaro* or *uazno* descent who were personally dependent on the goodwill of the Court. By means of *shedsqaleba* the King made strong his "loyal and faithful servant", enriched him materially and increased the number of his *qmani*. Thus by the side of the *didgvariani* officials there came into existence in each generation a group of *msakhureuli shedsqalebulni* who, although they lacked the distinction of birth and the influence of class, were at the same time very strong, since they had been raised to the patronage of numerous towns, fortresses and villages. But the over-generous character of the beneficence shown towards the promoted *ugvaro* officials and administrators in the end defeated its own purpose; and the system of *shedsqaleba* served to perpetuate those evils to eradicate which the kings had directed all their energies and their favours. *Shedsqaleba* gradually raised the new favourites, these *ugvaro* officials, to a position of influence and power; in course of time it concentrated in their hands new accumulations of wealth; the administrative positions which they held gained them a steadily increasing political influence, and their descendants, finding themselves in the position of great hereditary land-owners, easily forgot their *uazno* or *ugvaro* origins and their indebtedness to the Crown. In these circumstances their ambitions proved as matchless and their

[1] S. Kakabadze, *XIII Saukunis pirveli nakhevris Sakartvelos Katolikozebi* (*The Georgian Catholicoses of the first half of Thirteenth Century*).

474 421 products of the collective farms and cooperative organizations, as well as their common buildings, constitute the common, socialist property of the collective farms and cooperative organizations.

Every household in a collective farm, in addition to its basic income from the common, collective-farm enterprise, has for its personal use a small plot of household land and, as its personal property, a subsidiary husbandry on the plot, a dwelling house, livestock, poultry and minor agricultural implements - in accordance with the Rules of the Agricultural Artel.

423 474 Art. 8. The land occupied by collective farms is secured to them for their use free of charge and for an unlimited time, that is, in perpetuity.

472 Art. 9. Alongside the socialist system of economy, which is the predominant form of economy in the Georgian SSR, the law permits the small private economy of individual peasants and handicraftsmen based on their own labour and precluding the exploitation of the labour of others.

421 Art. 10. The personal property right of citizens in their incomes and savings from work, in their dwelling houses and subsidiary home enterprises, in articles of domestic economy and use and articles of personal use and convenience, as well as the right of citizens to inherit personal property, is protected by law.

185 471 Art. 11. The economic life of the Georgian SSR is determined and directed by the state national-economic plan, with the aim of increasing the public wealth, of steadily raising the material and cultural standards of the working people, of consolidating the independence of the USSR and strengthening its power and defensive capacity.

461 Art. 12. Work in the Georgian SSR is a duty and a matter of honour for every able-bodied citizen, in accordance with the principle: "He who does not work, neither shall he eat."

The principle applied in the Georgian SSR is that of socialism: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his work."

Chapter II. The State Structure

642 Art. 13. For the purpose of mutual assistance among the Union Republics along economic and political lines, as well as along the line of defence, the Georgian SSR voluntarily united with the other equal Soviet Socialist Republics, namely:

The Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic,
The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic,
The Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic,
The Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic,
The Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic,
The Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic,
The Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic,
The Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic,
The Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic,
The Kirghis Soviet Socialist Republic,